

## PRESS ITEM FOR THE DCI

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Date: 20 Feb

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Attached is first report of Defense Secretary  
 Laird's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations  
 Committee regarding the ABM system

(LAIRD)

WASHINGTON--DEFENSE SECRETARY LAIRD SAID T  
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IS GOING FORWARD WITH "TESTS ON A SOPHISTICATED NEW ABM (ANTIBALLISTIC  
MISSILE) SYSTEM."

LAIRD, TESTIFYING BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM RED CHINA AND RUSSIA, HE WOULD BE REMISS IN HIS DUTIES TO PROTECT THE NATIONAL SECURITY IF HE COMMITTED HIMSELF AGAINST DEPLOYMENT OF THE U.S. SENTINEL ABM SYSTEM.

THE SENTINEL SYSTEM AS DEvised DURING THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A "THIN" ABM DEFENSE, LARGELY AGAINST THE THREAT OF A LIMITED CHINESE MISSILE ATTACK.

LAIRD SAID, AS HE HAS BEFORE, THAT HE BELIEVED THE CHINESE WOULD FIRE A TEST INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE (ICBM) "IN 18 MONTHS" AND BY 1975 WOULD HAVE OUT 20 TO 30 MISSILES "THAT COULD HIT THE UNITED STATES."

LAIRD ASSURED SENATORS, HOWEVER, THAT THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT WAS UNDERTAKING A "SERIOUS, THOROUGH AND COMPLETE REVIEW" OF THE SENTINEL SYSTEM. HE SAID IT HAD NOT YET MADE A DECISION ON WHETHER TO RESUME DEPLOYMENT OF THE CONTROVERSIAL PROJECT.

WORK IN CONNECTION WITH DEPLOYMENT OF THE SENTINEL SYSTEM, ORIGINALLY DESIGNED WITH SITES NEAR SOME MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS, WAS SUSPENDED RECENTLY PENDING A REVIEW OF THE PROGRAM.

LAIRD TOLD OF SOVIET TESTS ON A NEW ABM SYSTEM WHILE ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR LAST YEAR'S DECISION TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION ON A U.S. SYSTEM.

"THE SOVIET UNION IS GOING AHEAD WITH TESTS ON SOPHISTICATED, NEW ABM SYSTEM, ACCORDING TO OUR INTELLIGENCE," LAIRD SAID.

HE DID NOT GIVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WHAT THE SYSTEM WOULD INCLUDE, OR HOW EFFECTIVE IT MIGHT BE AGAINST U.S. ICBM'S.

AS FOR THE SENTINEL SYSTEM, LAIRD SAID "WE'RE LOOKING AT ALL THE OPTIONS."

HE DENIED SOME PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT THE PENTAGON WAS NOT EVEN CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF ABANDONING THE SYSTEM.

LAIRD SAID IT WOULD "NOT BE PROPER FOR ME AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO COMMIT THE UNITED STATES AGAINST CONSTRUCTION OF ITS OWN SYSTEM WHILE THE SOVIETS AND THE RED CHINESE WERE MAKING PROGRESS IN THE STRATEGIC WEAPONS FIELD."

UPI-65

Approved For Release 2002/05/07 : CIA-RDP71B00364R000300090022-2

ADD 2 LAIRD, WASHINGTON

THE LAST INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS BY THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION MADE NO MENTION OF SOVIET TESTS OF A MORE SOPHISTICATED ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM.

PREPARED BY FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY C

CLARK M. CLIFFORD IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE, IT SAID "DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY CURTAILED CONSTRUCTION AT SOME OF THE 'GALOSH' ABM COMPLEXES THEY WERE DEPLOYING AROUND MOSCOW."

"THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ACTION CANNOT AS YET BE ASCERTAINED," CLIFFORD SAID. "HOWEVER, IT IS THE CONSENSUS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY THAT THE GALOSH SYSTEM AS PRESENTLY DEPLOYED COULD PROVIDE ONLY A LIMITED DEFENSE OF THE MOSCOW AREA AND COULD BE SERIOUSLY DEGRADED BY CURRENTLY PROGRAMMED U.S. WEAPONS SYSTEMS."

LAIRD ALSO WENT BEYOND THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION IN STATING THAT A FRACTIONAL ORBITAL BALLISTIC-MISSILE SYSTEM (FOBS) "IS BEING DEPLOYED BY THE SOVIET UNION TODAY."

REFERRING TO THIS SYSTEM WHICH WOULD PUT MISSILES INTO AN ORBIT OR PART OF AN ORBIT BEFORE CALLING THEM DOWN ON TARGETS, CLIFFORD SAID:

"BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAINTIES CONCERNING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSES OF THIS (SOVIET) WEAPON SYSTEM WE ARE UNABLE AT THIS TIME TO ESTIMATE ITS DEPLOYMENT."

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(READ IN 2ND PGH ABOVE XXX DEFENSE SECRETARY CLARK M. CLIFFORD LTC)  
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UPI-52

ADD 1 LAIRD, WASHINGTON (UPI-36)

LAIRD DID NOT SAY WHAT THE "SOPHISTICATED" ABM THE RUSSIANS WERE TESTING WAS. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, OTHER DEFENSE OFFICIALS REPORTED PRIVATELY THAT THE RUSSIANS PROBABLY WERE DEVELOPING BETTER RADARS. FOR SEVERAL YEARS THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN BUILDING A SYSTEM CALLED GALOSH AROUND MOSCOW. IN THE LAST TWO YEARS THEY HAVE CURTAILED CONSTRUCTION OF PART OF THE GALOSH SYSTEM. THE MOST PREVALENT PENTAGON THEORY TO EXPLAIN THIS IS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE HELD UP TO INSTALL BETTER EQUIPMENT, PROBABLY RADARS.

UNDER QUESTIONING LAIRD KEPT REPEATING THAT HE HOPED THE U.S. AND RUSSIA WOULD HOLD ARMS TALKS, BUT HE DECLINED TO SET ANY TIMETABLE. HE SAID THE TIMING OF SUCH TALKS SHOULD NOT BE PINNED TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE NONPROLIFERATION TREATY BY THE REQUIRED 40 NATIONS, WHICH COULD TAKE A YEAR OR TWO.

AT ONE POINT LAIRD SAID THAT SINCE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN IN OFFICE ONLY "A VERY FEW WEEKS" IT IS NOT YET PREPARED TO START ARMS NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA.

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